

61, 61, 64, 65, 67, 68; *karimatensis* (Karimata Islands): 55, 57, 62.

Culmen: *rhizophorae* (Sunda Strait and West Java): 10, 10.9, 11, 11, 11.1, 11.3, 11.5, 11.9, 12.1, 12.2, 12.2, 12.6; *longipennis* (Karimundjawa): 11.8, 12.1, 12.2, 12.4, 12.6, 12.6 *karimatensis* (Karimata Islands): 11, 11.8, 11.9.

Max., min. and average measurements:

	<i>rhizophorae</i>	<i>longipennis</i>	<i>karimatensis</i>
Wing:	67-72	74-79	70-74
	69.36	76.30	71.67
Tail:	54-59	59-68	55-62
	56.77	62.70	58
Culmen:	10-12.6	11.8-12.6	11-11.9
	11.48	12.28	11.57

Some measurements compiled from literature:

Chasen and Boden Kloss: ⁵ and ⁶

longipennis, ♂♂ Wing: 78, 79, 80, 82 (av. 79.75)

♀♀ Wing: 74, 75, 75, 76.5, 77, 79 (av. 76.08)

rufigastra, ♂♂ Wing: 71-77; ♀♀ 68-73.

Boden Kloss and Chasen:¹

karimatensis, ♂♂ Wing: 74, 75, 76.5, 77, 77, 77, 77.5, 78, 78
(av. 76.67)

♀♀ Wing: 71, 71, 72.5, 74, 74 (av. 72.50)

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- ¹ Boden Kloss, C. and Chasen, F. N. On a small collection of Birds from the Karimata Islands, West Borneo, *Treubia*, 14, 1932/34, p. 161.
- ² Chasen, F. N. On a collection of Birds from the Krakatau group of Islands, Strait Sunda: *Treubia*, 16, 1937, p. 250/1.
- ³ — A Handlist of Malaysian Birds: *Bulletin Raffles Museum*, Singapore; Vol. 11, 1935, p. 166 (footnote).
- ⁴ Chasen, F. N. and Boden Kloss, C. On some Birds of the Genus *Cyornis*; *Bull. Raffles Museum*, Singapore, no. 2, 1929, p. 34-39.
- ⁵ — A new race of *Cyornis* from the Java Sea, *Treubia*, 12, 1930, p. 271.
- ⁶ — On a small collection of Birds from the Karimoen Djawa Islands; *Treubia*, 14, 1932/34, p. 169.
- ⁷ Hoogerwerf, A. Notes on the vertebrate fauna of the Krakatau Islands; *Treubia*, 22, 1953, p. 334/5.
- ⁸ — Some ornithological notes on the Smaller Islands around Java (with the description of seven new subspecies); *Ardea*, 50, 1962, p. 190/92.
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On a nest of the Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* in Zambia

by R. J. DOWSETT

Received 5th March, 1965

Benson, Brooke and Vernon (1964) give no breeding record of either the Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* (Linn.) or the Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* (Stanley) from Zambia or

Malawi, and only one of each species from Rhodesia. In view of this paucity of data it is worthwhile discussing in some detail the first nest of *B. africanus* to be found in Zambia.

I found the nest near Ngoma camp in the Kafue National Park (15.54' S, 25.58' E) in the late afternoon of 4th January 1965. The nest hole was 15 feet up in a *Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia* (Pax) tree and faced south. The nest contained three young just about to fledge, which were being fed by a group of four adults. The nest chamber was 13 inches deep; the young were fed at the mouth of it, and as soon as the adults flew away they dropped down inside. The young and adults were very noisy during feeding, but while the adults were away the young remained quiet.

When the nest was examined closely two of the young flew from it, one strongly and out of sight, the other weakly to the ground. This latter was collected as a specimen, which is now in the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, Livingstone, Zambia. It was not fully grown, and measured: wing 97.5, bill (to skull) 20.0, tarsus 24.0 and tail 47.0 mm. Contrary to the description given by McLachlan and Liversidge (1957) and by Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1963) this specimen, and the other two young seen, had not a "dusky" coloured bill, but a yellow one, pale at the tip and shading to lemon at the gape. When the specimen was re-examined six weeks after being preserved the bill had faded to a dull buff, with little trace of yellow. The iris was a uniform dark brown. The tarsus and toes were light blue-grey with off-white soles, compared with the black tarsus of an adult in breeding dress examined in the collection of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum.

Comparison of the fledgling collected, with the skin of an adult in the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, possible through the kind assistance of C. W. Benson, reveals several plumage differences not mentioned by either McLachlan and Liversidge (1957) or Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1963). In the juvenile, the feathers of the forehead, crown, nape, scapulars, mantle, back, rump and upper tail-coverts are all finely barred with black; there is no sign of any such shadow barring on the adult. Similarly the juvenile throat and upper breast feathers are finely barred. The rump of the juvenile is buffy, less bright yellow than that of the adult. The under parts of the juvenile are more orange than the rather yellow under parts of the adult. The head and back of the adult have an olive tint absent from the juvenile.

In the field, juvenile *B. africanus* could probably be distinguished from adults of that species by the very short tail. There should be no confusion with young of *B. erythrorhynchus*, as these young *B. africanus* already had the prominent pale rump typical of the adult.

At my request B. L. Mitchell, Biologist of the Kafue National Park, examined the stomach contents of the specimen collected. He reports that there was a considerable amount of hair, apparently of Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer* Sparrman), an unidentified seed and what seemed to be the legs of a beetle. No ticks were found. When the contents were placed in formalin a smoky solution was produced, probably indicative of the presence of blood in the stomach. The stomach contents of seven *B. africanus* (presumably adult) examined by van Someren (1951) contained a number of ticks and a good deal of hair.

It is interesting that these oxpeckers should be breeding in the rains in Zambia, when animals are considerably dispersed and hosts difficult to see in thick vegetation. It is known that within an area of four square miles around the nest the only potential hosts at this time were 20 Buffalo, about 9 Kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros* Pallas) and a few Wart Hog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus* Pallas) (personal observation). However, I noted *B. africanus* on only the first two of these species. Other ungulates in the area seldom, if ever, carried oxpeckers. It would seem that these nesting *B. africanus* were feeding solely on these few Buffalo and Kudu, both of which are species inhabiting thickets in which they are not readily visible. I noted that these Buffalo were supporting at least 20 *B. africanus* at this time. The feeding of the young by four adults might be in order to provide a sufficient supply of food at a difficult time of year. Oxpeckers may have good eyesight, but even so, considerably more difficulty must be experienced in finding hosts during the rains than in the dry season.

B. africanus is quite common in game areas in Zambia, being especially numerous in the Kafue National Park. The lack of breeding records is therefore surprising, especially as the feeding of young at the nest appears to be a noisy affair, noticeable at a considerable distance.

I should like to thank B. L. Mitchell for examining the stomach contents referred to in this paper; he and C. W. Benson read the draft of this paper.

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Winter dress of *Cisticola chiniana bensoni*

by M. A. TRAYLOR

Received 29th March, 1965

Through the very great kindness of C. W. Benson, I have now been able to examine two winter specimens of *Cisticola chiniana bensoni* Traylor (1964, B.B.O.C., 84: 83), previously known only from summer dress males. One of these is a first winter male, taken 25 April 1964 at Kalabo, Barotseland, the other an adult female, taken on the north edge of Liuwa plain, 14° 15' S, 22° 15' E, on 2 May, 1964. Both were collected by R. C. Hart.

The female is in fine fresh contour plumage and completing wing moult, the first to sixth primaries are fresh, the seventh growing, and the eighth to tenth old and worn. The tail is mixed, with the central rectrices still of the old summer plumage. The winter plumage turns out to be surprisingly close to the summer, being almost as dark and a warmer, less greyish, brown on the upper parts. The crown is a little more reddish, and the dorsal streaking slightly more pronounced. This is in marked contrast to the situation in *smithersi*, the nearest relative to the south. In *smithersi* the winter plumage is much paler and more tawny than the summer, the crown is much brighter, and the dorsal streaking strongly marked. It follows that the racial characters of *bensoni* are better marked